

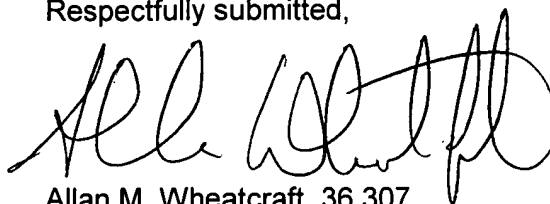
IN THE CLAIMS:

Please delete claim 21. Please amend claims 1 and 2 as follows:

1. (currently amended) A sealing material comprising a tape comprising a laminate having a height and a width and comprising a plurality of expanded porous polytetrafluoroethylene ~~film~~films, wherein the height of the laminate is greater than the width of the laminate.
2. (currently amended) A sealing material according to Claim 1, wherein said laminate has end faces along said height and the end faces ~~are adapted~~ are adapted to contact tightened surfaces of a vessel to be sealed.
3. (original) A sealing material according to Claim 2, wherein an adhesive component is applied to at least one end face of said laminate.
4. (original) A sealing material according to Claim 3, wherein release paper is applied to the adhesive component.
5. (original) A sealing material comprising a plurality of laminates according to Claim 1,
6. (original) A sealing material according to Claim 5, wherein said laminates have end faces along said height and an adhesive component is provided on at least one end face.
7. (original) A sealing material according to Claim 5, wherein the laminates are joined by being thermally fused using a tetrafluoroethylene-hexafluoropropylene copolymer film or tetrafluoroethylene-perfluoroalkyl vinyl ether copolymer film.
8. (original) A sealing material according to Claim 1, wherein at least one layer for preventing fluid penetration is interposed in the laminate.
9. (original) A sealing material according to Claim 8, wherein the layer for preventing fluid penetration comprises a fluoro-resin film.

10. (original) A sealing material according to Claim 9, wherein the fluororesin film comprises a compact polytetrafluoroethylene film.
11. (original) A sealing material according to Claim 10, wherein the compact polytetrafluoroethylene film comprises an expanded porous polytetrafluoroethylene in which the pores have been crushed flat under pressure.
12. (original) A sealing material according to Claim 1, wherein the laminate is adhesively unified through sintering of the expanded porous polytetrafluoroethylene films.
13. (original) A sealing material according to Claim 1 which has been joined at the longitudinal beginning and end to form a closed ring, wherein the direction in which the laminated strips have been laminated is the radial direction of the closed ring.
14. (original) A sealing material according to Claim 13, wherein the beginning and end are joined by adhesion with double sided adhesive tape.
15. (cancelled)
16. (cancelled)
17. (cancelled)
18. (cancelled)
19. (cancelled)
20. (original) A sealing material according to claim 8 wherein said layer for preventing fluid penetration comprises an elastomer.
21. (cancelled)

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Allan M. Wheatcraft', written in a cursive style.

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